

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-implemented method of providing merchandise return labels for enabling a customer to ship a package containing one or more items previously  
5 acquired from a merchant during a unique transaction, comprising the steps of:

accessing item data representing at least one detail about the item;

accessing transaction data representing at least one  
10 detail about the transaction associated with the item;

accessing customer data representing at least one detail about a customer associated with the transaction;

accessing package data representing at least one detail about the package in which the item is expected to  
15 be shipped;

correlating the item data, transaction data, customer data, and package data, with a set of stored business rules; wherein the business rules represent guidelines for determining at least one shipping  
20 parameter selected from the group of: choice of carrier, shipping destination, shipping rate, or package disposition;

generating a machine readable code, wherein the data represents the results of the correlating step and  
25 represents at least a shipping origin of the package and identification of the transaction; and

formatting the return label, such that the return label contains the machine readable code and complies with shipping label specifications of a carrier.

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2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the item data identifies an item type.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the item data identifies an item value.

5        4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the transaction data is a transaction identifier.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the transaction data is a transaction date.

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6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the customer data represents a shipping origin.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the customer data  
15 represents customer preferences.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the customer data identifies a payee of shipping costs.

20        9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the package data represents package weight.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the package data represents package size.

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11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of accessing shipping rate data.

12. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the  
30 step of accessing carrier center location data.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the carrier center location data represents bulk mail center data.

14. A computer product for providing merchandise return labels for enabling a customer to ship a package containing one or more items previously acquired from a merchant during a unique transaction, comprising

5 programming operable to:

access item data representing at least one detail about the item;

access transaction data representing at least one detail about the transaction associated with the item;

10 access customer data representing at least one detail about a customer associated with the transaction;

access package data representing at least one detail about the package in which the item is expected to be shipped;

15 correlate the item data, transaction data, customer data, and package data, with a set of stored business rules; wherein the business rules represent guidelines for determining at least one shipping parameter selected from the group of: choice of carrier, shipping

20 destination, shipping rate, or package disposition;

generate a machine readable code, wherein the data represents the results of the correlating step and represents at least a shipping origin of the package and identification of the transaction; and

25 format the return label, such that the return label contains the machine readable code and complies with shipping label specifications of a carrier.

15. The product of Claim 14, wherein the  
30 programming is operable to access at least one of the group of item data, customer data, transaction data, or product data, via a remote data communications link.

16. The product of Claim 14, wherein the programming is further operable to access shipping rate data.

5        17. The product of Claim 14, further comprising the step of accessing carrier center location data.

18. The product of Claim 14, wherein the carrier center location data represents bulk mail center data.

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19. The product of Claim 14, wherein the item data identifies an item type.

20. The product of Claim 14, wherein the item data  
15 identifies an item value.

21. The product of Claim 14, wherein the transaction data is a transaction identifier.

20        22. The product of Claim 14, wherein the transaction data is a transaction date.

23. The product of Claim 14 wherein the customer data represents a shipping origin.

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24. The product of Claim 14, wherein the customer data represents customer preferences.

25. The product of Claim 14, wherein the customer  
30 data identifies a payee of shipping costs.

26. The product of Claim 14, wherein the package data represents package weight.

27. The product of Claim 14, wherein the package  
5 data represents package size.

28. A computer product for providing merchandise return labels for enabling a customer to ship a package containing one or more items previously acquired from a merchant during a unique transaction, comprising

5 programming operable to:

access item data representing at least one detail about the item;

access transaction data representing at least one detail about the transaction associated with the item;

10 correlate the item data and transaction data with a set of stored business rules; wherein the business rules represent guidelines for determining at least one shipping parameter selected from the group of: shipping destination or shipping rate;

15 generate a machine readable code, wherein the data represents the results of the correlating step and represents at least a shipping origin of the package and identification of the transaction; and

format the return label, such that the return label  
20 contains the machine readable code and complies with shipping label specifications of a carrier.

29. The product of Claim 28, wherein the programming is further operable to access customer data  
25 representing at least one detail about a customer associated with the transaction, to further correlate customer data with the business rules.

30. The product of Claim 28, wherein the programming is further operable to access package data representing at least one detail about the package in which the item is expected to be shipped, and to further  
5 correlate package data with the business rules.

31. The product of Claim 28, wherein the shipping parameters further may comprise choice of carrier.

10 32. The product of Claim 28, wherein the shipping parameters further may comprise package disposition.